

2025 Delegate Assembly Proposed Legislative Resolution

TITLE OF RESOLUTION: PSEO Enrollment Requirements

SUBMITTED BY:

Hermantown Community Schools, ISD 700
Ashley McFarland, Board Member

RECOMMENDATION: **Passage**

BE IT RESOLVED, THAT MSBA URGES THE LEGISLATURE TO:

Grant school districts the authority to prioritize coursework offered in-district before allowing students enrollment through PSEO for same or substantially comparable courses. This ensures districts may deny a student PSEO enrollment for a same or substantially comparable course that is already offered in-district. This promotes student access to rigorous coursework taught by in-district teachers who know and care for them, while also strengthening peer connections and keeping support systems in place for academic success.

DESCRIBE THE PROBLEM:

Dual credit options offered to high school students in Minnesota play an important role in their educational pathways. Coursework through Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) provides the opportunity for diverse educational experiences that may not be offered in-district. However, there has been a significant erosion of purpose and intent for which PSEO was built upon. Instead of leveraging this program to seek additional subject content, students are often opting into PSEO for ease of academic rigor; pursuing coursework that is already offered in-district. With no ability to deny this practice, the value of in-district education, and the educators that provide it, are being undermined and devalued. Furthermore, this puts a significant strain on district finances and their ability to appropriately plan and staff to meet the needs of the communities they serve.

EXPLAIN WHY THIS IS A PROBLEM:

The Minnesota Department of Education's Strategic Plan states: *"Public education is a fundamental right for all students with access and equity as the foundational principles."* Instead of being used to enrich the educational experience, PSEO outsources our privilege to support this fundamental right and puts students in an environment that may not hold the same standards and values. There are several issues associated with unchecked PSEO participation that are placing a significant strain on public school districts.

Devaluing educators

PSEO has created a highly competitive environment, essentially treating our students as commodities. Our secondary education professionals have had to adjust their content, delivery, and rigor just to keep students in their classrooms. In the attempt to retain students, some districts are providing hybrid course schedules to stay attractive against highly flexible college PSEO schedules, even if the student is not mature enough to manage that learning format. If

Minnesota values public education and the educational professionals that are entrusted to providing this *fundamental right*, then we need to entrust those same people to counsel and educate our students when and where those opportunities exist. Teacher recruitment and retention is heavily reliant on a high level of trust and morale that is being eroded by these destructive PSEO practices. This environment further complicates efforts to bolster positive concurrent enrollment options, like College in the Schools that uplifts, not degrades, our existing educators. The incentive for educators to offer advanced and rigorous coursework is diminished when students are likely to opt into less rigorous work through PSEO.

Accountability

The bar keeps getting lowered by post-secondary institutions for qualification into these programs and very little accountability exists to ensure those students are successful. Because a district has very little ability to monitor student progress due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), students chance failure and yet are returned to the district to remediate, often by the same teachers they walked away from initially. In addition, nothing stops a student from enrolling in PSEO courses, despite an earlier failure. They can continue to enroll in PSEO at the school's expense without support and structure to help them be successful. Whether students are seeking easier coursework or are simply on the quest to "chase college credits," without the appropriate guidance from district counselors, students may not be prepared for the next step in their educational or career journeys.

Financial strain and staffing

When a student chooses to take a course through PSEO, despite it being offered in-district, funding is taken away from the school that is bound to provide education for all students, including those not enrolled in PSEO. If our belief in Minnesota is "*Every child, no matter their race or zip code, deserves a world-class education, with caring and qualified teachers, in a safe and nurturing environment,*" (MDE Strategic Plan) then we must support our school districts to do so and retain the funding entrusted to them for this mission. If we continue to allow students to take a junior-level English or senior-level math course through PSEO, the funding eventually will not be there to retain an educator to continue to provide that same class to all learners. Equity disparities will continue to widen.

To be clear, this proposed resolution is not intended to restrict PSEO for students. It is intended to frame reasonable sidebars around how PSEO should and should not be leveraged to further student education opportunities. In-district coursework should always be prioritized in order to support our educators and the students they serve while being good stewards of district finances. PSEO coursework should be used to enrich, not replace, public education.

BACKGROUND PROVIDED BY SCHOOL DISTRICT:

Graphics from sample set of schools used to illustrate problem (identify 5- or 10-year horizon):

- PSEO (all) enrollment (display as # of pupils, # of courses, and/or # of credits) - also represent as a percentage of eligible students
- PSEO (only full-time) enrollment (display as # of pupils) - also represent as a percentage of eligible students
- Cost of credits - negotiated rate for various PSEO agreements

- Cost to district - “tuition” paid out
- Number of students failing, withdrawing or not graduating due to being enrolled in a program that does not fit their needs (academically, socially and emotional).

Other state guidance:

- Iowa Postsecondary Enrollment Options Program through Senior Year Plus (<https://educate.iowa.gov/media/1184/download?inline>, page 33): *“Through the program, individual students may enroll in an eligible postsecondary course if a comparable course is not offered at their school.”*

Wisconsin Early College Credit Program (https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/dual-enrollment/2024_09_ECCP_Overview_updated_2024_09_2.pdf, page 4 & 9): *“Nonsectarian courses that are not comparable to a course offered by the school district, private high school, or charter high school that the pupil is enrolled in are eligible.” AND “School districts, private high schools, and charter schools are not “approving” ECCP courses. Their role is only to determine if a comparable high school course is available to the pupil, if the ECCP course would fulfill a graduation requirement, and the number of high school credits earned (if any).”*

Concurrent Enrollment and PSEO are both dual-credit pathways under Minnesota law, but operate under distinct frameworks and delivery methods.

Concurrent Enrollment explained:

Concurrent Enrollment under [Minnesota Statutes § 124D.09, subdivision \(c\)](#):

“Concurrent enrollment” means nonsectarian courses in which an eligible pupil enrolls to earn both secondary and postsecondary credits, taught by either a secondary teacher or postsecondary faculty member, and offered at a high school that qualifies for concurrent enrollment program aid.

Essentially, these are collegelevel courses delivered at the high school—by a qualified high school instructor (or visiting college faculty), under a formal agreement with a college.

Courses must meet accreditation standards and run under formal partnership agreements between the school district and the postsecondary institution.

College in the Schools (CIS) is a specific concurrent enrollment program run by UMN.

Postsecondary Enrollment Options (PSEO) explained:

Minnesota law [defines PSEO](#) as a program allowing high school students to enroll in college courses and earn both high school and college credit. These courses are taken on a college campus or online and are taught entirely by college faculty.

Students become dual-enrolled—they are considered college students and must abide by college-level expectations and policies. Courses are fully funded: tuition, fees, and textbooks (in

most cases) are covered by the state. Available to 10th–12th graders (10th graders limited to specific Career & Technical Education (CTE) courses).

PSEO has two funding mechanisms

- Direct payment (MDE pays the college directly, very small percentage of PSEO occurrences) - statute states that at least 12% of the students' ADM funding stays with the home district
- PSEO by contract (MDE pays the high school and the high school pays the college, the overwhelming majority of PSEO occurrences) - students could take more credits than what the district receives funding for. Most PSEO contracts have a credit limit that the student can take from that college, but a student could take credits from multiple colleges and accumulate credit expenses that exceed the ADM the school receives, leading to a deficit of funding. There is no way for high schools to limit students and MDE cannot track these issues, resulting in a financial burden that has grown substantially with online PSEO growth.

Potentially limit PSEO credits a student can take in a given year:

- *Limit to equivalent of a full-time high school load: 15 credits/term, 30 credits/academic year*
- Currently, PSEO students can take up to 18 college semester credits/term (more than Minnesota State Grant-15 credits and Federal Pell Grant-12+ credits).
- Students taking courses from high school (5-6) and college (18 credits) must “give up” at least one course at high school - further exacerbating funding challenges for the district.

CURRENT POSITION:

5.001 We urge the legislature to support dual enrollment options including Post-Secondary Enrollment (PSEO) pathways, Concurrent Enrollment and Career Technical Education (CTE) that are accessible and affordable to all students. These opportunities prepare students for post-secondary success by providing opportunities to earn college credits while still in high school, thereby reducing the time and cost of obtaining a degree. To ensure affordable and equitable access to all students we encourage the legislature to:

- Provide the necessary revenue to school districts to adequately fund all post secondary programs.
- Require Minnesota PSEO institutions and school districts to collaborate on student success by sharing timely, relevant educational data including but not limited to: Mid-term progress, final grades, and attendance. (2022)
- Realign K-12 postsecondary educational programs in a uniform and consistent manner. (2014)
- Continue to engage the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) in discussions to explore and find alternative approaches to the current HLC policy related to high school CE/CIS instructors and to provide financial assistance to mitigate the effect of the policy requirements put forth by the HLC to maintain the structure and high standards for CE/CIS instructors. (2015)
- Create a regional task force to resolve the faculty requirements for Concurrent Enrollment Program. (2015)
- Eliminate the roadblocks for high school students to access postsecondary credits. (2013)

CURRENT LAW:

BACKGROUND PROVIDED BY MSBA: